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~~SECURITY INFORMATION~~

Assistant Director, O/RR

9 July 1952

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Memoranda sent to other parts of CIA in 1952 on devices, methods, studies and operative procedures of possible value in their work

1. From time to time, ideas have occurred to me dealing with CIA work in fields with which O/RR has only indirect concern. It has been my practice to put these ideas on paper, if an investigation they seemed novel and potentially useful, and to submit them to those offices in whose fields they seemed to lie, after previously discussing the matter with O/RR administrative personnel. It is, of course, then up to the recipient office to make use or not of the suggestions as it may see fit.

2. The enclosed tabulation shows, by title and summary description, the suggestions of this nature that have been submitted by me in the first six months of 1952, together with what I know as to the present status thereof. It will be noted that several have received serious consideration by OSO or [redacted] and may result in work of value to the Agency. In two other cases it was found that secret projects along the suggested lines were already under way outside CIA so my suggestions were not needed. One suggestion has been turned down.

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3. However, for the majority of the suggestions, no information as to what is being done therewith has been received. Most of those in this category are inventions thought desirable for intelligence collection or sabotage, and submitted to Technical Services Staff, which is responsible for most work in this field. Probably nothing is being done with these ideas, since TSS informs me that under its interpretation of instructions received, it must do no research and development on new devices, no matter how interesting, unless previously ordered to do so by a committee formed of certain operating people in OSO, OPC and elsewhere. It will not apparently present suggestions to this committee, for it states that it is overworked and has almost no laboratory or machine shop facilities, and must farm out to private industry for development many items that considerations of security would dictate being kept in CIA hands alone.

4. This seems a very undesirable state of affairs. First, the outsider with an idea must engage in laborious detective work in the operating offices to find a person who is both interested and able to have TSS or other agency directed to work on the matter. This is neither simple nor expeditious, for OSO, OPC and other operating offices do not publish a classified directory of what they work on, who works on a particular covert subject, what devices and procedures they now have or what are their facilities and limitations in the use of those

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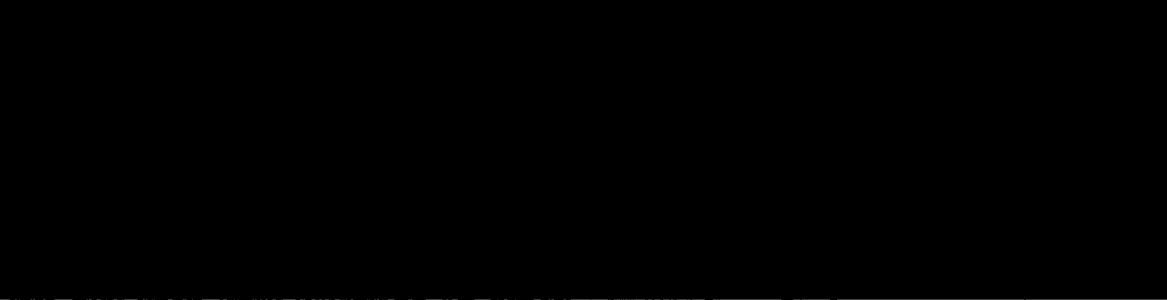
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that may be suggested. This means that many good ideas must die untransmitted, from simple difficulty in finding the proper channel of approach and in getting the confidence of an operating man who is naturally suspicious of a stranger from some other part of the Agency who desires to talk on work in enemy areas.

5. Second, assuming the stranger has not been discouraged, a "gadget" idea, for example, depends for its transmission as much on salesmanship of the author or the particular "gadget-mindedness" of the operating man, as it does on intrinsic merit, and neither the inventor nor the operative can know as much about practical difficulties of manufacture as can the research men in TSS. A good salesman will then get TSS instructed to work on a plausible but fundamentally impracticable idea, while a germ of something meritorious may be dismissed as of no interest, because poorly presented or because one particular operating man had a bad result with a "gadget" some time in the past. I am informed that TSS has been tied down to working on ideas submitted by the committee, because it allegedly gave insufficient attention to the practical difficulties of the men in the field and came up in the past with interesting devices that were not what the field man wanted. But in any event, the present setup both in TSS and elsewhere, is such as to make reception of outside ideas hard, and work on all ideas excessively slow and possibly insecure.

6. As illustrative of what the procedures involve in frustration and delay, I give one current case. While I was Chief of the Transportation Branch, I submitted well over two years ago a patent for

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... have been contained in brief memoranda. Copies were sent to TSS in May 1952.

7. Recently, through rare personal acquaintance, I was approached by OSO personnel on certain "gadgetry" items, and in the course of conversation it came out that OSO had just put to TSS a request that the latter develop a [redacted] so that uranium movements might be followed. No knowledge of my previous designs was available to the OSO requester, and the latter had just received a reply from TSS that it would work on the problem, and would expect to come up with a suitable instrument in eighteen months. Apparently my work might as well

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have been thrown away. A device could have been available nearly two years ago, if my first idea had been acted on, and I think a better device could be made now in probably less than a month based on the designs submitted in May. Apparently these were in some compartment of TSS while a commitment to work out a design from scratch was being handled elsewhere. It is of course not expected by me that anything more than a reasonable fraction of my or anyone's ideas will prove practicable on investigation, and this memorandum is not a demand that all such ideas be carried out. But in the present case an idea was first checked, stated to be practicable, and then scrapped, while later ideas apparently were not even considered, due to the system.

8. The system needs changing, for outside ideas should be encouraged. Even when they are impracticable or downright foolish, they may nevertheless jolt the expert's thinking out of a rut, and produce better ideas by a species of cross fertilization. We cannot afford to build bottlenecks or cast-aside courses into our flow of suggestions, or hold that only a man appointed to think in a particular field can have ideas in it. It is suggested that this matter of arranging a better channel for suggestions be given serious thought, for we cannot afford to waste ideas or time — we have too persistent and clever an opponent.

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